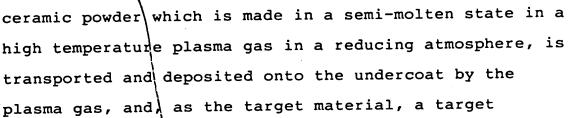
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## CLAIMS

- 1. A sputtering target comprising a substrate and a target material formed on the substrate, wherein the target material comprises a metal oxide of the chemical formula  $MO_x$  as the main component, wherein  $MO_x$  is a metal oxide which is deflicient in oxygen as compared with the stoichiometric composition, and M is at least one metal selected from the group consisting of Ti, Nb, Ta, Mo, W, Zr and Hf.
- 2. The sputtering target according to Claim 1, wherein in said MO<sub>x</sub>, M is Nb and/or Ta, and x is within a range of 2<x<2.5.
  - 3. The sputtering target according to Claim 1, wherein in said  $MO_x$ , M is Mo and/or W, and x is within a range from 2 < x < 3.
  - 4. The sputtering target according to Claim 1, wherein in said  $MO_x$ , M is at least one metal selected form the group consisting of Ti, Zr and Hf, and x is within a range of 1< x< 2.
- 5. The sputtering target according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, wherein the target material has a resistivity of at most  $10\Omega$  cm at room temperature.
- 6. A process for producing a sputtering target, which comprises forming an undercoat made of a metal or alloy on a substrate, and forming a ceramic layer as a target material on the undercoat, wherein the ceramic layer as a target material is formed by plasma spraying wherein a





- material comprising a metal oxide of the chemical formula  $MO_{\mathbf{x}}$  as the main component, is used, wherein  $MO_{\mathbf{x}}$  is a metal oxide which is deficient in oxygen as compared with the stoichiometric composition, and M is at least one metal selected from the group consisting of Ti, Nb, Ta,
- 10 Mo, W, Zr and Hf.
  - 7. The process for producing a sputtering target according to Claim 6, wherein, as the undercoat, a layer having a thermal expansion coefficient intermediate between the thermal expansion coefficient of the ceramic
- layer and the thermal expansion coefficient of the substrate, and/or a layer having a thermal expansion coefficient close to the thermal expansion coefficient of the ceramic layer, is used.
- 8. The process for producing a sputtering target
  20 according to Claim 6, wherein the plasma spraying is
  water plasma spraying.
  - 9. The process for producing a sputtering target according to Claim 6, wherein a cylindrical substrate is used as the substrate.
- 25 10. The process for producing a sputtering target according to Claim 6, wherein a surface-roughened substrate is used as the substrate.

11. A method for forming a film having a high refractive index by sputtering, wherein, as a sputtering target, the sputtering target as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 5 is used.

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